

**THE AMERICAN VETERAN
EDITION 2
PART 1**

WELCOME TO THIS EDITION OF "THE AMERICAN VETERAN," A PROGRAM PRODUCED BY THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS.

I'M JIM BENSON.

WE TARGET STORIES ABOUT GOVERNMENT AND PRIVATE PROGRAMS THAT WILL BENEFIT YOU, THE AMERICAN VETERAN.

OUR FIRST PIECE IS AN UNUSUAL SUCCESS STORY OF A VETERAN WHO HAS USED HIS MILITARY EXPERIENCE TO MAKE IT IN THE BIG TIME. HE ALSO HAS SOME PRACTICAL ADVICE FOR TRANSITIONING MILITARY MEMBERS SEEKING JOBS IN THE CIVILIAN WORLD.

IF YOU KNOW ABOUT THE HIT TV SHOW, THE APPRENTICE, YOU KNOW DONALD TRUMP HIRES ONLY THE BEST OF THE BEST. LAST DECEMBER KELLY PERDEW GOT HIS DREAM JOB. HE'S A VETERAN WHO CREDITS MUCH OF HIS SUCCESS TO HIS MILITARY SERVICE HISTORY.

JON LEIBERMAN PROFILES THE NEW "APPRENTICE."

I'M KELLY PERDEW, 37 AND A WEST POINT GRADUATE. I SERVED IN THE ARMY AS AN INTELLIGENCE OFFICER AND AN AIRBORNE RANGER.

DONALD TRUMP: KELLY, WHY SHOULD I CHOOSE YOU?

FROM WEST POINT TRAINS LEADERS BOTH FOR THE ARMY AND FOR THE NATION WHEN THEY GET OUT OF THE ARMY.

LEIBERMAN: KELLY PERDEW WANTED THE JOB WORKING FOR DONALD TRUMP. DOZENS OF TIMES THROUGHOUT THE SHOW HE POINTED OUT ON NATIONAL TELEVISION THAT HIS MILITARY TRAINING MADE HIM UNIQUELY QUALIFIED FOR THE TASK. IN THE END, IT PAYED OFF.

TRUMP: JENNIFER...NEVERTHELESS... I HAVE TO SAY, YOU'RE FIRED. KELLY YOU'RE HIRED.

PERDEW : IT WAS LIKE A BIG ADRENALINE PUMP. I THINK I KEPT MY CALM, MY COOL. I STAYED PRETTY COLLECTED BECAUSE AT THAT POINT IN TIME I REALLY FELT LIKE I HAD PUT EVERYTHING OUT THERE.

LEIBERMAN: NOW, KELLY IS PERCHED INSIDE AN OFFICE IN TRUMP PLAZA IN NEW YORK CITY WORKING FOR DONALD TRUMP.

HE WEARS HIS WEST POINT RING EVERYDAY, REMINDING HIM OF THE VALUE OF HIS MILITARY EXPERIENCE.

PERDEW : I'M VERY EXCITED ABOUT BEING A ROLE MODEL FOR PEOPLE WHO HAVE BEEN IN THE MILITARY AND TRANSITIONED TO CIVILIAN LIFE.

LEIBERMAN: A GLIMPSE INTO KELLY'S PAST PROVIDES INSIGHT INTO HOW HE GOT TO WHERE IS TODAY. A MAJOR MOMENT HAPPENED WHILE HE WAS A JUNIOR IN HIGH SCHOOL IN WYOMING. THEN- CONGRESSMAN DICK CHENEY GAVE A GRADUATION SPEECH AT HIS SCHOOL.

PERDEW : I WENT UP TO HIM AND SPOKE TO HIM AFTERWARD AND I ASKED HIM WHAT HE THOUGHT ABOUT THE MILITARY ACADEMY AND HE SAID THEY ARE A GREAT PLACE TO GET AN EDUCATION AND SERVE THE COUNTRY. THAT KIND OF PLANTED THE SEED.

KELLY DECIDED TO PETITION CHENEY FOR A NOMINATION TO WEST POINT.

FROM WEST POINT, TO AIRBORNE AND RANGER TRAINING, KELLY SAYS HIS MILITARY TRAINING LED HIM TO A SUCCESSFUL CAREER IN THE SOFTWARE DEVELOPMENT BUSINESS AND OTHER VENTURES, AND A WIN ON THE APPRENTICE.

PERDEW : FROM MY PERSPECTIVE, SEE A LOT OF THINGS I HAD DONE IN THE PAST AND NOT BE SO STRESSED BE VERY COMFORTABLE IN THAT ENVIRONMENT AND I ATTRIBUTE A LOT OF THAT TO THE TRAINING I RECEIVED IN THE MILITARY.

LEIBERMAN: ALTHOUGH KELLY HIMSELF NEVER SERVED IN COMBAT, HE HAS THREE YOUNGER BROTHERS IN THE SERVICE INCLUDING ONE WHO RECENTLY RETURNED FROM IRAQ.

PERDEW : I'VE GOT A LOT OF RESPECT AND ADMIRATION FOR THOSE PEOPLE STILL SERVING. THERE'S BEEN AN OVERWHELMING GROUND SWELL OF SUPPORT FROM MILITARY THAT I APPRECIATE IMMENSELY.

LEIBERMAN: NOW KELLY SAYS HE IS HOPING TO HELP GIVE BACK TO THE MILITARY COMMUNITY. HE SAYS HE'LL START WITH SOME ADVICE FOR VETERANS LOOKING FOR JOBS.

PERDEW : BE CONFIDENT AND UNDERSTAND THAT YOU HAVE A LOT TO OFFER THAT PEOPLE WHO HAVE JUST BEEN IN CIVILIAN DON'T HAVE. SO I THINK THAT CONFIDENCE AND UNDERSTANDING HOW TO COMMUNICATE THE THINGS YOU'VE DONE WILL TAKE YOU A LONG WAY

LEIBERMAN: WHILE THIS NEW APPRENTICE ADMITS HIS LATEST SUCCESS IS UNUSUAL, HE SAYS EVERY VETERAN HAS WITHIN THEMSELVES WHAT IT TAKES TO BE A WINNER IN THE CIVILIAN WORLD.

PERDEW : DON'T BE AFRAID. YOU HAVE AN AMAZING SET OF SKILLS.

BENSON: WHILE KELLY PERDEW TOOK AN UNUSUAL ROUTE TO HIS NEW JOB, HE CERTAINLY ISN'T ALONE WHEN IT COMES TO VETERANS LOOKING FOR JOBS.

FOR MORE THAN 200,000 SERVICE MEMBERS SEPARATING FROM THE MILITARY EACH YEAR JOB HUNTING IS OFTEN A TOP PRIORITY. NOW, MORE THAN EVER THE PRIVATE SECTOR AND VA ARE THERE TO HELP. JON LEIBERMAN HAS MORE.

BRYAN MODEST, VETERAN: I WANT A CAREER. YOU KNOW, THEY HAVE JOBS AND THEY HAVE CAREERS. I WANT A CAREER, SOMETHING THAT, YOU KNOW, YOU CAN RETIRE FROM. SOMETHING THAT WILL GIVE YOU A GOOD FOUNDATION, PROVIDE FOR YOUR FAMILY.

LEIBERMAN: BRYAN MODEST IS ON A NEW KIND OF MISSION.

MODEST: I JUST GOT OUT THE MILITARY, JUST GOT OUT OF THE MARINE CORPS.

LEIBERMAN: A MARINE FOR 5 YEARS, MODEST HAS COME TO THIS JOB FAIR IN SUBURBAN WASHINGTON DC TO FIND A JOB IN THE CIVILIAN WORLD.

MODEST: THERE'S A LOT OF APPREHENSION. YOU GET WORRIED WHETHER OR NOT THEY'RE GOING TO CALL YOU OR NOT.

LEIBERMAN: EMPLOYERS HERE ARE ON A MISSION AS WELL TO FIND VETERANS WHO NEED JOBS. FROM THE SECRET SERVICE TO NSA TO DENNY'S, DOZENS OF EMPLOYERS FROM ACROSS THE SPECTRUM ARE HERE TO RECRUIT. THIS SPECIALIZED JOB FAIR IS ONE OF DOZENS EACH YEAR PUT ON BY A COMPANY CALLED MILITARY STARS, A COMPANY SPECIALIZING IN MATCHING VETERANS WITH JOBS.

HAL FISCHER, CEO MILITARY STARS: WE ACTUALLY BRING THE EMPLOYER AND THE MILITARY CANDIDATE TOGETHER AT AN EVENT WHERE THEY CAN MEET EACH OTHER FACE TO FACE, WHICH IS WHERE THE HIRING REALLY HAPPENS. THE MESSAGE FOR THE VETERANS IS COMPANIES ARE LOOKING FOR YOU.

LEIBERMAN: ONE OF THE COMPANIES AT THIS JOB FAIR, ORION INTERNATIONAL, SPECIALIZES IN MATCHING VETERANS JOB SKILLS WITH

JOBS.

BILL LAUGHLIN, CEO ORION INTERNATIONAL: EMPLOYERS THAT HAVE HIRED VETERANS HAVE SEEN WHAT A GREAT JOB THAT THEY DO WITHIN THEIR CORPORATIONS AND THEIR DEMAND IS EVER INCREASING. IN FACT, IT'S ALMOST AT THE POINT WHERE THERE'S MORE DEMAND THEN I HAVE SUPPLY TO GIVE THEM.

LEIBERMAN: ORION AND MILITARY STARS ARE BOTH OWNED AND OPERATED BY VETERANS. EACH COMPANY USES JOB FAIRS AND THE INTERNET TO RECRUIT BOTH VETERANS AND COMPANIES LOOKING TO HIRE THEM. JOB SEEKING VETERANS CAN LOG ONTO ORION INTERNATIONAL.COM AND MILITARYSTARS.COM TO POST RESUMES, SEARCH OPPORTUNITIES, AND GET INTERVIEW TIPS.

VETERANS DON'T PAY A DIME. EMPLOYERS FOOT THE BILL IN ORDER TO FIND QUALIFIED VETERANS. SOMETIMES THE MATCH IS A SURPRISE.

ROBIN EVANS, VETERAN: I USUALLY DON' T ANSWER THE PHONE ON THE WAY OUT BUT SOMETHING JUST TOLD ME, "ANSWER THIS CALL." AND I DID AND IT WAS HIM.

LEIBERMAN: ONE DAY LAST YEAR...ROBIN EVANS...WHO SERVED IN THE ARMY FOR 8 YEARS RECEIVED A PHONE CALL OUT OF THE BLUE FROM ORION. THEY HAD FOUND A COMPANY LOOKING FOR SOMEONE LIKE HER. A MONTH LATER SHE WAS WORKING AS AN ORDER SPECIALIST FOR PLUMBING SUPPLY COMPANY, FERGUSON.

EVANS: I WAS EXCITED JUST TO HAVE SOMEBODY SEE MY SKILLS AND PLACE ME WHERE I NEEDED TO BE.

JAMIE RYAN, FERGUSON COMPANY: FINDING GOOD QUALITY CANDIDATES IS TOUGH AND WE'VE FOUND THAT MILITARY HIRES IS A GREAT WAY TO GO.

LEIBERMAN: AND HELPING VETERANS FIND WORK IS A TOP PRIORITY FOR THE V.A. AS WELL.

WILLIE HENSLEY, DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS: OUR MESSAGE IS TO LET VETERANS KNOW THAT THE VA IS A GREAT PLACE TO WORK. WE HAVE A VERY NOBLE MISSION. THIS IS AN OPPORTUNITY FOR VETERANS TO HELP VETERANS, VETERANS TO SERVE VETERANS.

UNIDENTIFIED ANNOUNCER: DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS, IT'S DEFINITELY WORTH CHECKING OUT.

LEIBERMAN: THE VA IS DISTRIBUTING A DVD TOUTING THE BENEFITS OF

WORKING THERE. IT'S PART OF A MASSIVE OUTREACH EFFORT TO EDUCATE VETERANS ABOUT WHY THEY ARE ENTITLED TO PREFERENTIAL STATUS WHEN APPLYING FOR FEDERAL JOBS AND TO TRY AND ATTRACT THEM TO COME WORK FOR THE VA.

IN FACT, THE DEPARTMENT WANTS TO INCREASE THE NUMBER OF VETERANS WORKING FOR THEM TO ONE THIRD OF THE 225,000 MEMBER WORKFORCE BY 2008.

HENSLEY: WE HAVE VA FACILITIES ALL AROUND THE COUNTRY, SO A VETERAN INTERESTED IN WORKING IN, LET'S SAY, ALEXANDRIA, LOUISIANA, WILL FIND WE HAVE A VA FACILITY IN ALEXANDRIA, LOUISIANA. OR IF THEY'RE INTERESTED IN NEW YORK CITY, NEW YORK, WE HAVE FACILITIES THERE JUST AS WELL. THERE'S JUST A WEALTH OF OPPORTUNITY IN THE DEPARTMENT.

LEIBERMAN: WHILE THE PROSPECT OF FINDING A JOB MAY SEEM DAUNTING, THOSE WHO HAVE BEEN THROUGH IT SAY. "DON'T GIVE UP."

EVANS: ATTEND THESE JOB FAIRS AND, SOMETIMES YOU MAY THINK THEY'RE A WASTE OF TIME, BUT YOU NEVER KNOW WHO YOU WILL MEET WHEN YOU GET HERE.

BENSON: AGAIN, THERE ARE MANY VALUABLE RESOURCES TO HELP YOU OR A VETERAN YOU KNOW FIND A JOB.

THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS IS WORKING WITH THE DEPARTMENT OF LABOR ON THE "HIRE A VET" PROGRAM.

LINK TO VA.GOV/JOBS FOR MORE INFORMATION ON THAT PROGRAM. YOU CAN ALSO LOG ON TO WWW.OPM.GOV FOR ALL JOBS WITHIN THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT.

WHEN WE COME BACK, AN INSIDE LOOK AT A UNIQUE PROGRAM AT THE MENLO PARK VA MEDICAL CENTER. PLEASE STAY WITH US.

FOOTAGE PROVIDED BY NBC ENTERTAINMENT AND DISNEY WORLD.

PRODUCED BY THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS.

END OF TRANSCRIPT